

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 23370 191239Z

44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 CU-02 A-01 SY-05

OC-06 CCO-00 OPR-02 /067 W
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O R 191203Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2293

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 23370

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT TH

SUBJECT: FIELD MARSHALL PRAPHAT'S RETURN

REF: BANGKOK 23241

SUMMARY: PRAPHAT REFUSES TO LEAVE THAILAND VOLUNTARILY, IS PUT IN CUSTODY OF FIRST ARMY SUPPORTERS. CABINET REPORTEDLY VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO SENT PRAPHAT OUT OF THE COUNTRY; FIRST ARMY REFUSES TO RELEASE PRAPHAT; CABINET MAY ASK KING TO INTERVENT. RTA ON 100 PERCENT ALERT AS APPARENT PRE-CAUTIONARY MOVE. STUDENTS RALLY AT SANAM LUANG. END SUMMARY.

1. SPECIAL BRANCH POLICE LOCATED FIELD MARSHALL PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIAN ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 18 AT THE HOUSE OF A NEPHEW, MAJOR CHANCHAI THIANPRAPHAT. AFTER A HURRIED MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER SENI PRAMOT AND A NUMBER OF CABINET MINISTERS, POLICE OFFICIALS AND MILITARY OFFICERS, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 23370 191239Z

A FIVE-MAN GROUP WAS DISGNGATED TO ASK PRAPHAT TO LEAVE

THAILAND. PRAPHAT REFUSED THE REQUEST SAYING HE PREFERRED TO FACE ANY CHARGES AGAINST HIM IN A THAI COURT. HE SAID THAT HE WAS SICK WITH A HEART AILMENT, HAD POOR EYESIGHT AND WISHED TO REMAIN IN THAILAND FOR TREATMENT.
(COMMENT: IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE RTG LEGALLY TO DEPORT A THAI CITIZEN.)

2. PRAPHAT WAS PLACED IN THE PROTECTIVE CUSTODY OF LT-GEN YOT THEPHATSADIN, FIRST ARMY COMMANDER, AND ONE OF HIS FORMER SUPPORTERS. YOT APPARENTLY FAVORS ALLOWING PRAPHAT TO REMAIN IN THAILAND. PRAPHAT HAS OTHER SUPPORTERS WITHIN THE FIRST ARMY THROUGH FAMILY AND CLOSE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS.

3. SEVERAL GOVERNMENT SOURCES REPORTED THAT THE CABINET VOTED UNANIMOUSLY ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 19 TO HAVE PRAPHAT SENT OUT OF THAILAND. RADIO REPORTS STATE THAT WHEN YOT WAS PRESENTED WITH AN ORDER TO PRODUCE PRAPHAT, HOWEVER, HE DECLINED TO DO SO, SAYING HE HAD TO CONSULT WITH HIS UNIT COMMANDERS FIRST. THE CABINET THEN REPORTEDLY ABANDONED THAT TACK AND DECIDED TO URGE THE KING TO ASK PRAPHAT TO LEAVE THAILAND.

4. THERE HAS BEEN AS YET NO INFORMATION ON THE KING'S REACTION TO PRAPHAT'S RETURN AND SO NO WAY OF JUDGING WHAT HIS RESPONSE TO SUCH A REQUEST MIGHT BE. IF THE REPORT IS TRUE, AND THE KING TURNS DOWN THE REQUEST, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE IN A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION.

5. ALL ROYAL THAI ARMY UNITS IN THE BANGKOK AREA WERE PUT ON 100 PERCENT ALERT ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 18 IN AN APPARENT PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE BY ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF GEN BUNCHAI BAMRUNGPHONG TO MAINTAIN TIGHT CONTROL OVER THE ARMY.

6. MEANWHILE STUDENTS ARE RALLYING AT THE SANAM LUANG AND DEMANDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT EITHER ARREST OR DEPORT PRAPHAT AND PUNISH THOSE WHO HELPED HIM ENTER THE COUNTRY. AT 1830 LOCAL TIME THE CROWD WAS ALREADY ESTIMATED TO BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 15,000. A NUMBER OF ACTIVISTS HAVE REPORTEDLY FILED CHARGES AGAINST PRAPHAT FOR HIS ROLE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 23370 191239Z

OCT 1973 UPRISING AS A MEANS OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE POLICE AND GOVERNMENT TO TAKE FIRMER ACTION. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE POLICE WILL DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE CHARGES.
WHITEHOUSE

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